

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 18-48 are now pending in the application. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection(s) in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1 and 18-36 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 6,977,000 (Vanasse) in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,288,161 (Graves). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants note that Vanasse has a filing date of June 30, 2003. The instant application claims priority to Great Britain Application No. 0313137.2, filed on June 6, 2003. Because the instant application claims priority to Great Britain Application No. 0313137.2, with the filing date of June 6, 2003, which is before the earliest priority date of the Vanasse patent, filed June 30, 2003, and since the Great Britain Application No. 0313137.2, fully supports the pending claims (see Figures 1-2), Applicants submit that the Vanasse reference does not qualify as prior art under 35 U.S.C. §102 or §103. Applicants' representative left a phone message with Examiner Stroud on January 19, 2009 to discuss the Vanasse patent. At the time of filing this response, the phone message had not yet been returned. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

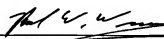
Applicants respectfully submit that if the pending claims are not in condition for allowance that any subsequent Office Action be non-final consistent with §706.07(a) set forth in the MPEP.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

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Respectfully submitted,

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